

Ibn Battuta

Ibn Battuta (/ˈɪbən bætˈtuːtɑː/; 24 February 1304 – 1368/1369),^[a] was a **Maghrebi** traveller, explorer and scholar.^[7] Over a period of 30 years from 1325 to 1354, he visited much of **Africa**, the **Middle East**, **Asia** and the **Iberian Peninsula**. Near the end of his life, Ibn Battuta dictated an account of his journeys, titled *A Gift to Those Who Contemplate the Wonders of Cities and the Marvels of Travelling*, commonly known as *The Rihla*.

Ibn Battuta travelled more than any other explorer in pre-modern history, totalling around 117,000 km (73,000 mi), surpassing **Zheng He** with about 50,000 km (31,000 mi) and **Marco Polo** with 24,000 km (15,000 mi).^{[8][9][10]}

Name

"Ibn Battuta" is a **patronymic**, literally meaning 'son of a duckling'.^[11] His most common full name is given as **Abu Abdullah Muhammad** ibn Battuta.^[12] In his **travelogue**, *The Rihla*, he gives his full name as "**Shams al-Din** Abu 'Abdallah Muhammad ibn 'Abdallah ibn Muhammad ibn Ibrahim ibn Muhammad ibn Yusuf **Lawati** al-**Tanji** ibn Battuta".^{[13][14][15]}

Early life



A miniature from **al-Wasiti's Maqamat of Al-Hariri** of pilgrims on a *hajj*

All that is known about Ibn Battuta's life comes from the autobiographical information included in the account of his travels, which records that he was of **Berber** descent,^[9] born into a family of Islamic **legal scholars** (known as qadis in the Muslim traditions of **Morocco**) in **Tangier** on 24 February 1304, during the reign of the **Marinid dynasty**.^[16] His family belonged to a Berber tribe clan known as the **Lawata**.^[17] As a young man, he would have studied at a **Sunni Maliki** school,

the dominant form of education in [North Africa](#) at that time.^[18] Maliki Muslims requested that Ibn Battuta serve as their religious judge, as he was from an area where it was practised.^[19]

Journeys

Itinerary, 1325–1332



Ibn Battuta Itinerary 1325–1332 (North Africa, Iraq, Iran, the Arabian Peninsula, Somalia, Swahili Coast)

First pilgrimage

On 2 Rajab 725 [AH](#) (14 June 1325 AD), Ibn Battuta set off from his home town at the age of 21 to perform a [hajj](#) (pilgrimage) to [Mecca](#), a journey that would ordinarily take sixteen

Shaykh ^[1] Ibn Battuta	
ابن بطوطة	
	
1878 illustration by Léon Benett showing Ibn Battuta (center) and his guide (left) in Egypt	
Born	24 February 1304 Tangier , Marinid sultanate
Died	1369 (aged 64–65) Marrakesh , Marinid sultanate ^[2]
Other names	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">The Islamic Marco Polo</div>
Occupation(s)	Traveller, Geographer , explorer, scholar, judge
Era	Post-classical history
Notable work	Rihla
Arabic name	
Personal (Ism)	Muḥammad مُحَمَّد

months. He was eager to learn more about far-away lands and craved adventure. He would not return to Morocco again for 24 years.^[20]

I set out alone, having neither fellow-traveler in whose companionship I might find cheer, nor caravan whose part I might join, but swayed by an overmastering impulse within me and a desire long-cherished in my bosom to visit these illustrious sanctuaries. So I braced my resolution to quit my dear ones, female and male, and forsook my home as birds forsake their nests. My parents being yet in the bonds of life, it weighed sorely upon me to part from them, and both they and I were afflicted with sorrow at this separation.^[21]

Patronymic <i>(Nasab)</i>	ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf ibn Baṭṭūṭah ابن عبد الله بن محمد بن إبراهيم بن محمد بن يوسف بن بطوطة
Teknonymic <i>(Kunya)</i>	‘Abū ‘Abd Allāh أبو عبد الله
Epithet <i>(Laqab)</i>	Shams al-Dīn شمس الدين

He travelled to Mecca overland, following the North African coast across the sultanates of [Abd al-Wadid](#) and [Hafsid](#). The route took him through [Tlemcen](#), [Béjaïa](#), and then [Tunis](#), where he stayed for two months.^[22] For safety, Ibn Battuta usually joined a [caravan](#) to reduce the risk of being robbed. He took a bride in the town of [Sfax](#),^[23] but soon left her due to a dispute with the father. That was the first in a series of marriages that would feature in his travels.^[24]



Ottoman 17th century tile
depicting the Kaaba, in Mecca

In the early spring of 1326, after a journey of over 3,500 km (2,200 mi), Ibn Battuta arrived at the port of [Alexandria](#), at the time part of the [Bahri Mamluk empire](#). He met two ascetic pious men in Alexandria. One was Sheikh Burhanuddin, who is supposed to have foretold the destiny of Ibn Battuta as a world traveller and told him, "It seems to me that you are fond of foreign travel. You must visit my brother Fariduddin in India, Rukonuddin in Sind, and Burhanuddin in China. Convey my greetings to them." Another pious man, Sheikh Murshidi, interpreted a dream of Ibn Battuta as being that he was meant to be a world traveller.^{[25][26]}

He spent several weeks visiting sites in the area, and then headed inland to [Cairo](#), the capital of the [Mamluk Sultanate](#). After spending about a month in Cairo,^[27] he embarked on the first of many detours within the relative safety of Mamluk territory. Of the three usual routes to Mecca, Ibn Battuta chose the least-traveled, which involved a journey up the [Nile](#) valley, then east to the [Red Sea](#) port of 'Aydhab.^[b] Upon approaching the town, however, a local rebellion forced him to turn back.^[29]

Ibn Battuta returned to Cairo and took a second side trip, this time to Mamluk-controlled [Damascus](#). During his first trip he had encountered a holy man who prophesied that he would only reach Mecca by travelling through [Syria](#).^[30] The diversion held an added advantage; because of the holy places that lay along the way, including [Hebron](#), [Jerusalem](#), and [Bethlehem](#), the Mamluk authorities kept the route safe for pilgrims. Without this help many travellers would be robbed and murdered.^{[31][c]}

After spending the Muslim month of [Ramadan](#), during August,^[36] in Damascus, he joined a caravan travelling the 1,300 km (810 mi) south to [Medina](#), site of the Mosque of the Islamic prophet [Muhammad](#). After four days in the town, he journeyed on to Mecca while visiting holy sites along the way; upon his arrival to Mecca he completed his first pilgrimage, in November,

and he took the honorific status of *El-Hajji*. Rather than returning home, Ibn Battuta decided to continue travelling, choosing as his next destination the *Ilkhanate*, a *Mongol Khanate*, to the northeast.^[37]

Iraq and Iran

On 17 November 1326, following a month spent in Mecca, Ibn Battuta joined a large caravan of pilgrims returning to *Iraq* across the *Arabian Peninsula*.^[38] The group headed north to Medina and then, travelling at night, turned northeast across the *Najd* plateau to *Najaf*, on a journey that lasted about two weeks. In Najaf, he visited the *mausoleum* of *Ali*, the *Fourth Caliph*.^[39]

Then, instead of continuing to *Baghdad* with the caravan, Ibn Battuta started a six-month detour that took him into *Iran*. From Najaf, he journeyed to *Wasit*, then followed the river *Tigris* south to *Basra*. His next destination was the town of *Isfahan* across the *Zagros Mountains* in Iran. He then headed south to *Shiraz*, a large, flourishing city spared the destruction wrought by *Mongol* invaders on many more northerly towns. Finally, he returned across the mountains to Baghdad, arriving there in June 1327.^[40] Parts of the city were still ruined from the damage inflicted by *Hulagu Khan's* invading army in 1258.^[41]

In Baghdad, he found *Abu Sa'id*, the last Mongol ruler of the unified *Ilkhanate*, leaving the city and heading north with a large retinue.^[42] Ibn Battuta joined the royal caravan for a while, then turned north on the *Silk Road* to *Tabriz*, the first major city in the region to open its gates to the Mongols and by then an important trading centre as most of its nearby rivals had been razed by the Mongol invaders.^[43]

Ibn Battuta left again for Baghdad, probably in July, but first took an excursion northwards along the river *Tigris*. He visited *Mosul*, where he was the guest of the *Ilkhanate* governor,^[44] and then the towns of *Cizre* (Jazirat ibn 'Umar) and *Mardin* in modern-day Turkey. At a hermitage on a mountain near *Sinjar*, he met a *Kurdish* mystic who gave him some silver coins.^{[d][47]} Once back in Mosul, he joined a "feeder" caravan of pilgrims heading south to Baghdad, where they would meet up with the main caravan that crossed the *Arabian Desert* to Mecca. Ill with diarrhoea, he arrived in the city weak and exhausted for his second *hajj*.^[48]

Arabia

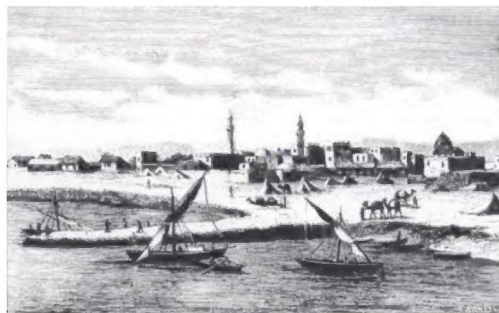


Old City of Sana'a, Yemen

Ibn Battuta remained in Mecca for some time (the *Rihla* suggests about three years, from September 1327 until autumn 1330). Problems with chronology, however, lead commentators to suggest that he may have left after the 1328 *hajj*.^[e]

After the *hajj* in either 1328 or 1330, he made his way to the port of **Jeddah** on the **Red Sea** coast. From there he followed the coast in a series of boats (known as a *jalbah*, these were small craft made of wooden planks sewn together, lacking an established phrase) making slow progress against the prevailing south-easterly winds. Once in **Yemen** he visited **Zabīd** and later the highland town of **Ta'izz**, where he met the **Rasulid** dynasty king (*Malik*) Mujahid Nur al-Din Ali. Ibn Battuta also mentions visiting **Sana'a**, but whether he actually did so is doubtful.^[49] In all likelihood, he went directly from Ta'izz to the important trading port of **Aden**, arriving around the beginning of 1329 or 1331.^[50]

Somalia



The port and waterfront of **Zeila**

From **Aden**, Ibn Battuta embarked on a ship heading for **Zeila** on the coast of **Somalia**. He then moved on to **Cape Guardafui** further down the Somali seaboard, spending about a week in each location. Later he would visit **Mogadishu**, the then pre-eminent city of the "**Land of the Berbers**" (بلد البربر *Balad al-Barbar*, the medieval Arabic term for the **Horn of Africa**).^{[51][52][53]}

When Ibn Battuta arrived in 1332, Mogadishu stood at the zenith of its prosperity. He described it as "an exceedingly large city" with many rich merchants, noted for its high-quality fabric that was exported to other countries, including **Egypt**.^[54] Battuta added that the city was ruled by a **Somali**

sultan, Abu Bakr ibn Shaikh 'Umar.^{[55][56]} He noted that Sultan Abu Bakr had dark skin complexion and spoke in his native tongue (Somali), but was also fluent in Arabic.^{[57][56][58]} The Sultan also had a retinue of [wazirs](#) (ministers), legal experts, commanders, royal [eunuchs](#), and other officials at his beck and call.^[56]

Swahili coast

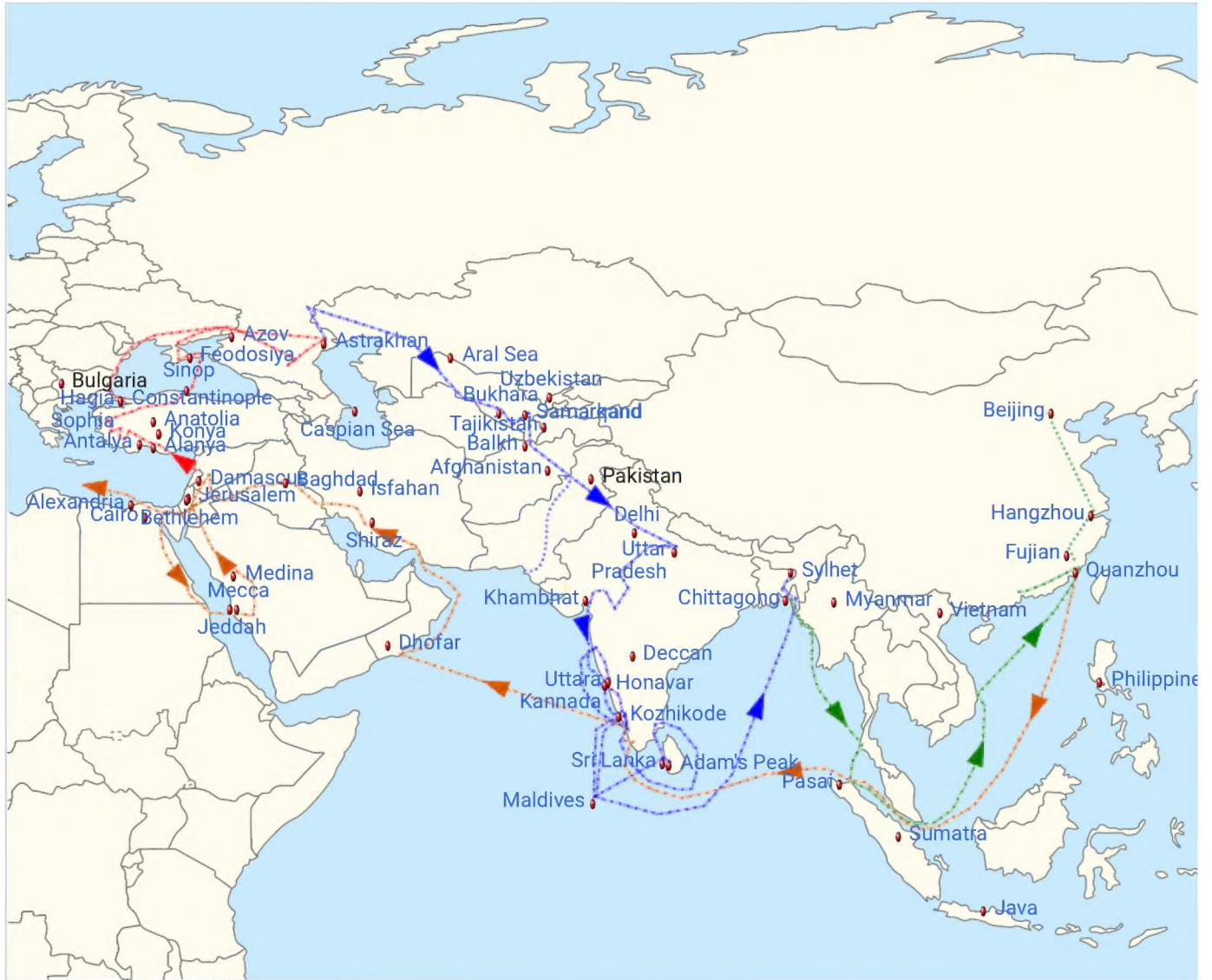


The Great Mosque of [Kilwa Kisiwani](#), made of [coral stones](#), is the largest Mosque of its kind.

Ibn Battuta continued by ship south to the [Swahili coast](#), a region then known in Arabic as the *Bilad al-Zanj* ("Land of the [Zanj](#)")^[59] with an overnight stop at the island town of [Mombasa](#).^[60] Although relatively small at the time, Mombasa would become important in the following century.^[61] After a journey along the coast, Ibn Battuta next arrived in the island town of [Kilwa](#) in present-day [Tanzania](#),^[62] which had become an important transit centre of the gold trade.^[63] He described the city as "one of the finest and most beautifully built towns; all the buildings are of wood, and the houses are roofed with *dīs* reeds".^[64]

Ibn Battuta recorded his visit to the [Kilwa Sultanate](#) in 1330, and commented favourably on the humility and religion of its ruler, [Sultan al-Hasan ibn Sulaiman](#), a descendant of the legendary [Ali ibn al-Hassan Shirazi](#). He further wrote that the authority of the Sultan extended from [Malindi](#) in the north to [Inhambane](#) in the south and was particularly impressed by the planning of the city, believing it to be the reason for Kilwa's success along the coast. During this period, he described the construction of the [Palace of Husuni Kubwa](#) and a significant extension to the [Great Mosque of Kilwa](#), which was made of [coral stones](#) and was the largest mosque of its kind. With a change in the [monsoon](#) winds, Ibn Battuta sailed back to Arabia, first to [Oman](#) and the [Strait of Hormuz](#) then on to Mecca for the *hajj* of 1330 (or 1332).^[65]

Itinerary 1332–1347



Ibn Battuta Itinerary 1332–1346 (Black Sea Area, Central Asia, India, South East Asia and China)

Anatolia



Ibn Battuta may have met
[Andronikos III Palaiologos](#) in late
1332.

After his third pilgrimage to Mecca, Ibn Battuta decided to seek employment with the [Sultan of Delhi, Muhammad bin Tughluq](#). In the autumn of 1330 (or 1332), he set off for the [Seljuk](#) controlled territory of [Anatolia](#) to take an overland route to India.^[66] He crossed the [Red Sea](#) and the [Eastern Desert](#) to reach the [Nile valley](#) and then headed north to [Cairo](#). From there he crossed the [Sinai Peninsula](#) to [Palestine](#) and then travelled north again through some of the towns that he had visited in 1326. From the Syrian port of [Latakia](#), a [Genoese](#) ship took him (and his companions) to [Alanya](#) on the southern coast of modern-day Turkey.^[67]

He then journeyed westwards along the coast to the port of [Antalya](#).^[68] In the town he met members of one of the semi-religious *fityan* associations.^[69] These were a feature of most Anatolian towns in the 13th and 14th centuries. The members were young artisans and had at their head a leader with the title of *Akhi*.^[70] The associations specialised in welcoming travellers. Ibn Battuta was very impressed with the hospitality that he received and would later stay in their hospices in more than 25 towns in Anatolia.^[71] From Antalya Ibn Battuta headed inland to [Eğirdir](#) which was the capital of the [Hamidids](#). He spent [Ramadan](#) (June 1331 or May 1333) in the city.^[72]

From this point his itinerary across Anatolia in the *Rihla* becomes confused. Ibn Battuta describes travelling westwards from Eğirdir to [Milas](#) and then skipping 420 km (260 mi) eastward past Eğirdir to [Konya](#). He then continues travelling in an easterly direction, reaching [Erzurum](#) from where he skips 1,160 km (720 mi) back to [Birgi](#) which lies north of Milas.^[73] Historians believe that Ibn Battuta visited a number of towns in central Anatolia, but not in the order in which he describes.^{[74][f]}

When Ibn Battuta arrived in [İznik](#), it had just been conquered by [Orhan](#), sultan of the [Ottoman Beylik](#). Orhan was away and his wife was in command of the nearby stationed soldiers, Ibn Battuta gave this account of Orhan's wife: "A pious and excellent woman. She treated me honourably, gave me hospitality and sent gifts."^[77]

Ibn Battuta's account of Orhan:^[78]

The greatest of the kings of the Turkmens and the richest in wealth, lands and military forces. Of fortresses, he possesses nearly a hundred, and for most of his time, he is continually engaged in making a round of them, staying in each fortress for some days to put it in good order and examine its condition. It is said that he has never stayed for a whole month in any one town. He also fights with the infidels continually and keeps them under siege.

—Ibn Battuta

Ibn Battuta had also visited [Bursa](#) which at the time was the capital of the Ottoman Beylik, he described Bursa as "a great and important city with fine [bazaars](#) and wide streets, surrounded on all sides with gardens and running springs".^[79]

He also visited the [Beylik of Aydin](#). Ibn Battuta stated that the ruler of the Beylik of Aydin had twenty Greek slaves at the entrance of his palace and Ibn Battuta was given a Greek slave as a gift.^[77] His visit to Anatolia was the first time in his travels he acquired a servant; the ruler of Aydin gifted him his first slave. Later, he purchased a young Greek girl for 40 [dinars](#) in [Ephesus](#), was gifted another slave in [İzmir](#) by the Sultan, and purchased a second girl in [Balıkesir](#). The conspicuous evidence of his wealth and prestige continued to grow.^[80]

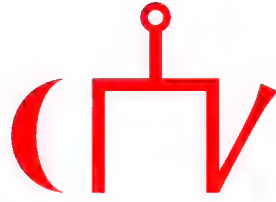
Central Asia



Bactrian camel (one of the symbols of Silk Road caravans) in front of Mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi in the city of Turkestan, Kazakhstan

From [Sinope](#), he took a sea route to the [Crimean Peninsula](#), arriving in the [Golden Horde](#) realm. He went to the port town of [Azov](#), where he met with the emir of the Khan, then to the large and rich city of [Majar](#). He left Majar to meet with [Uzbeg Khan's](#) travelling court (*Orda*), which was at the time near [Mount Beshtau](#). From there he made a journey to [Bolghar](#), which became the northernmost point he reached, and noted its unusually short nights in summer (by the standards of the subtropics). Then he returned to the Khan's court and with it moved to [Astrakhan](#).

Ibn Battuta recorded that while in Bolghar he wanted to travel further north into the land of darkness. The land is snow-covered throughout ([northern Siberia](#)) and the only means of transport is dog-drawn sled. There lived a mysterious people who were reluctant to show themselves. They traded with southern people in a peculiar way. Southern merchants brought various goods and placed them in an open area on the snow in the night, then returned to their tents. Next morning they came to the place again and found their merchandise taken by the mysterious people, but in exchange they found fur-skins which could be used for making valuable coats, jackets, and other winter garments. The trade was done between merchants and the mysterious people without seeing each other. As Ibn Battuta was not a merchant and saw no benefit of going there he abandoned the travel to this land of darkness.^[81]



Flag of the [Golden Horde](#) during
the reign of [Öz Beg Khan](#)

When they reached Astrakhan, [Öz Beg Khan](#) had just given permission for one of his pregnant wives, Princess Bayalun, a daughter of [Byzantine emperor Andronikos III Palaiologos](#), to return to her home city of [Constantinople](#) to give birth. Ibn Battuta talked his way into this expedition, which would be his first beyond the boundaries of the Islamic world.^[82]

Arriving in Constantinople towards the end of 1332 (or 1334), he met the [Byzantine](#) emperor Andronikos III Palaiologos. He visited the great church of [Hagia Sophia](#) and spoke with an [Eastern Orthodox](#) priest about his travels in the city of Jerusalem. After a month in the city, Ibn Battuta returned to Astrakhan, then arrived in the capital city [Sarai al-Jadid](#) and reported the accounts of his travels to Sultan [Öz Beg Khan](#) (r. 1313–1341). Then he continued past the [Caspian](#) and [Aral Seas](#) to [Bukhara](#) and [Samarkand](#), the latter of which he praised as "one of the grandest and finest cities, and the most perfect of them". Here he visited the court of another Mongol khan, [Tarmashirin](#) (r. 1331–1334) of the [Chagatai Khanate](#).^[83] He also noted the ruined state of the city walls, a result of the [Mongol invasion in 1220](#) and subsequent infighting.^[84] From there, he journeyed south to [Afghanistan](#), then crossed into India via the mountain passes of the [Hindu Kush](#).^[85] In the *Rihla*, he mentions these mountains and the history of the range in slave trading.^{[86][87]} He wrote,

After this I proceeded to the city of [Barwan](#), in the road to which is a high mountain, covered with snow and exceedingly cold; they call it the Hindu Kush, that is Hindu-slayer, because most of the slaves brought thither from India die on account of the intenseness of the cold.

—Ibn Battuta, Chapter XIII, *Rihla* – Khorasan^{[87][88]}

Ibn Battuta and his party reached the [Indus River](#) on 12 September 1333.^[89] From there, he made his way to Delhi and became acquainted with the sultan, [Muhammad bin Tughluq](#).

Indian subcontinent



Tomb of Feroze Shah Tughluq, successor of [Muhammad bin Tughluq](#) in Delhi. Ibn Battuta served as a [qadi](#) or judge for six years during Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign.

[Muhammad bin Tughluq](#) was renowned as the wealthiest man in the Muslim world at that time. He patronised various scholars, Sufis, [qadis](#), [viziers](#), and other functionaries in order to consolidate his rule. On the strength of his years of study in Mecca, Ibn Battuta was appointed a *qadi* (judge) by the sultan.^[90] However, he found it difficult to enforce [Islamic law](#) beyond the sultan's court in [Delhi](#), due to lack of Islamic appeal in India.^[91]



Ibn Battuta in 1334 visited the [shrine of Baba Farid](#) in [Pakpattan](#).^[92]

It is uncertain by which route Ibn Battuta entered the [Indian subcontinent](#) but it is known that he was kidnapped and robbed by rebels on his journey to the Indian coast. He may have entered via the [Khyber Pass](#) and [Peshawar](#), or further south.^[93] He crossed the [Sutlej river](#) near the city of [Pakpattan](#),^[94] in modern-day Pakistan, where he paid obeisance at the [shrine of Baba Farid](#),^[92] before crossing southwest into Rajput country. From the [Rajput](#) kingdom of Sarsatti, Battuta visited [Hansi](#) in India, describing it as "among the most beautiful cities, the best constructed and the most populated; it is surrounded with a strong wall, and its founder is said to be one of the great non-Muslim kings, called Tara".^[95] Upon his arrival in [Sindh](#), Ibn Battuta mentions the [Indian rhinoceros](#) that lived on the banks of the [Indus](#).^[96]

The Sultan was erratic even by the standards of the time and for six years Ibn Battuta veered between living the high life of a trusted subordinate and falling under suspicion of [treason](#) for a

variety of offences. His plan to leave on the pretext of taking another *hajj* was stymied by the Sultan. The opportunity for Battuta to leave Delhi finally arose in 1341 when an embassy arrived from the [Yuan dynasty](#) of China asking for permission to rebuild a [Himalayan Buddhist temple](#) popular with Chinese pilgrims.^{[9][100]}

Ibn Battuta was given charge of the embassy but en route to the coast at the start of the journey to China, he and his large retinue were attacked by a group of [bandits](#).^[101] Separated from his companions, he was robbed, kidnapped, and nearly lost his life.^[102] Despite this setback, within ten days he had caught up with his group and continued on to [Khambhat](#) in the Indian state of [Gujarat](#). From there, they sailed to [Calicut](#) (now known as Kozhikode), where Portuguese explorer [Vasco da Gama](#) would land two centuries later. While in Calicut, Battuta was the guest of the ruling [Zamorin](#).^[90] While Ibn Battuta visited a mosque on shore, a storm arose and one of the ships of his expedition sank.^[103] The other ship then sailed without him only to be seized by a local [Sumatran](#) king a few months later.

Afraid to return to Delhi and be seen as a failure, he stayed for a time in southern India under the protection of Jamal-ud-Din, ruler of the small but powerful [Nawayath Sultanate](#) on the banks of the [Sharavathi](#) river next to the [Arabian Sea](#). This area is today known as Hosapattana and lies in the [Honnavar Taluk](#) of [Uttara Kannada](#). Following the overthrow of the sultanate, Ibn Battuta had no choice but to leave India. Although determined to continue his journey to China, he first took a detour to visit the [Maldiv Islands](#) where he worked as a judge.^[104]

He spent nine months on the islands, much longer than he had intended. When he arrived at the capital, [Malé](#), Ibn Battuta did not plan to stay. However, the leaders of the formerly [Buddhist](#) nation that had recently [converted to Islam](#) were looking for a chief judge, someone who knew Arabic and the Qur'an. To convince him to stay they gave him pearls, gold jewellery, and slaves, while at the same time making it impossible for him to leave by ship. Compelled into staying, he became a chief judge and married into the royal family of [Omar I](#).

Ibn Battuta took on his duties as a judge with keenness and strived to transform local practices to conform to a stricter application of Muslim law. He commanded that men who did not attend Friday prayer be publicly whipped, and that robbers' right hand be cut off. He forbade women from being topless in public, which had previously been the custom.^[105] However, these and other strict judgements began to antagonise the island nation's rulers, and involved him in power struggles and political intrigues. Ibn Battuta resigned from his job as chief [qadi](#), although in all likelihood it was inevitable that he would have been dismissed.

Throughout his travels, Ibn Battuta kept close company with women, usually taking a wife whenever he stopped for any length of time at one place, and then divorcing her when he moved on. While in the Maldives, Ibn Battuta took four wives. In his *Travels* he wrote that in the Maldives

the effect of small [dowries](#) and female non-mobility combined to, in effect, make a marriage a convenient temporary arrangement for visiting male travellers and sailors.

From the Maldives, he carried on to [Sri Lanka](#) and visited [Sri Pada](#) and [Tenavaram temple](#). Ibn Battuta's ship almost sank on embarking from Sri Lanka, only for the vessel that came to his rescue to suffer an attack by pirates. Stranded onshore, he worked his way back to the [Madurai](#) kingdom in India. Here he spent some time in the court of the short-lived [Madurai Sultanate](#) under Ghiyas-ud-Din Muhammad Damghani,^[106] from where he returned to the Maldives and boarded a Chinese [junk](#), still intending to reach China and take up his ambassadorial post.

He reached the port of [Chittagong](#) in modern-day [Bangladesh](#) intending to travel to [Sylhet](#) to meet [Shah Jalal](#), who became so renowned that Ibn Battuta, then in Chittagong, made a one-month journey through the mountains of [Kamaru](#) near Sylhet to meet him. On his way to Sylhet, Ibn Battuta was greeted by several of Shah Jalal's disciples who had come to assist him on his journey many days before he had arrived. At the meeting in 1345 CE, Ibn Battuta noted that Shah Jalal was tall and lean, fair in complexion and lived by the mosque in a cave, where his only item of value was a goat he kept for milk, butter, and yogurt. He observed that the companions of the Shah Jalal were foreign and known for their strength and bravery. He also mentions that many people would visit the Shah to seek guidance. Ibn Battuta went further north into [Assam](#), then turned around and continued with his original plan.

Southeast Asia

In 1345, Ibn Battuta travelled to [Samudra Pasai](#) Sultanate (called "al-Jawa") in present-day [Aceh](#), Northern [Sumatra](#), after 40 days voyage from Sunur Kawan.^{[107][108]} He notes in his travel log that the ruler of Samudra Pasai was a pious Muslim named Sultan Al-Malik Al-Zahir Jamal-ad-Din, who performed his religious duties with utmost zeal and often waged campaigns against animists in the region. The island of [Sumatra](#), according to Ibn Battuta, was rich in [camphor](#), [areca nut](#), [cloves](#), and [tin](#).^[109]

The [madh'hab](#) he observed was Imam [Al-Shafi'i](#), whose customs were similar to those he had previously seen in [coastal India](#), especially among the [Mappila](#) Muslims, who were also followers of Imam Al-Shafi'i. At that time Samudra Pasai marked the end of [Dar al-Islam](#), because no territory east of this was ruled by a Muslim. Here he stayed for about two weeks in the wooden walled town as a guest of the sultan, and then the sultan provided him with supplies and sent him on his way on one of his own [junks](#) to China.^[109]

Ibn Battuta first sailed for 21 days to a place called "Mul Jawa" (island of Java or [Majapahit](#) Java) which was a center of [a Hindu empire](#). The empire spanned 2 months of travel, and ruled over the country of Qaqula and Qamara. He arrived at the walled city named Qaqula/Kakula, and observed that the city had war junks for pirate raiding and collecting tolls and that elephants were

employed for various purposes. He met the ruler of Mul Jawa and stayed as a guest for three days.^{[110][111][112]}

Ibn Battuta then sailed to a state called Kaylukari in the land of [Tawalisi](#), where he met [Urduja](#), a local princess. Urduja was a brave warrior, and her people were opponents of the [Yuan dynasty](#). She was described as an "idolater", but could write the phrase [Bismillah](#) in [Islamic calligraphy](#). The locations of Kaylukari and Tawalisi are disputed. Kaylukari might referred to [Po Klong Garai](#) in [Champa](#) (now southern Vietnam), and Urduja might be an aristocrat of [Champa](#) or [Dai Viet](#). Filipinos widely believe that Kaylukari was in present-day [Pangasinan Province](#) of the [Philippines](#).^[113] Their opposition to the Mongols might indicate 2 possible locations: Japan and Java (Majapahit).^[114] In modern times, Urduja has been featured in Filipino textbooks and films as a national heroine. Numerous other locations have been proposed, ranging from [Java](#) to somewhere in [Guangdong Province](#), China. However, Sir [Henry Yule](#) and [William Henry Scott](#) consider both Tawalisi and Urduja to be entirely fictitious. From Kaylukari, Ibn Battuta finally reached [Quanzhou](#) in [Fujian](#) Province, China.

China



Ibn Battuta provides the earliest mention of the [Great Wall of China](#) with regard to medieval geographic studies, although he did not see it.

In the year 1345, Ibn Battuta arrived at [Quanzhou](#) in China's [Fujian](#) province, then under the rule of the Mongol-led [Yuan dynasty](#). One of the first things he noted was that Muslims referred to the city as "Zaitun" (meaning [olive](#)), but Ibn Battuta could not find any olives anywhere. He mentioned local artists and their mastery in making portraits of newly arrived foreigners; these were for security purposes. Ibn Battuta praised the craftsmen and their [silk](#) and [porcelain](#), as well as fruits such as [plums](#) and [watermelons](#) and the advantages of paper money.^[115]

He described the manufacturing process of large ships in the city of [Quanzhou](#).^[116] He also mentioned Chinese cuisine and its use of animals such as frogs, pigs, and even dogs, which were sold in the markets, and noted that the chickens in China were larger than those in the west. Scholars however have pointed out numerous errors given in Ibn Battuta's account of China, for example confusing the [Yellow River](#) with the [Grand Canal](#) and other waterways, as well as believing that porcelain was made from coal.^[117]

In Quanzhou, Ibn Battuta was welcomed by the head of the local Muslim merchants (possibly a *fānzhǎng* or "Leader of Foreigners" [simplified Chinese](#): 番长; [traditional Chinese](#): 番長; [pinyin](#): *fānzhǎng*) and Sheikh al-Islam ([Imam](#)), who came to meet him with [flags](#), [drums](#), [trumpets](#), and musicians.^[118] Ibn Battuta noted that the Muslim populace lived within a separate portion in the city where they had their own mosques, bazaars, and hospitals. In Quanzhou, he met two prominent Iranians, Burhan al-Din of [Kazerun](#) and Sharif al-Din from [Tabriz](#)^[119] (both of whom were influential figures noted in the *Yuan History* as "A-mi-li-ding" and "Sai-fu-ding", respectively).^[120] While in Quanzhou he ascended the "[Mount of the Hermit](#)" and briefly visited a well-known [Taoist](#) monk in a cave.

He then travelled south along the Chinese coast to [Guangzhou](#), where he lodged for two weeks with one of the city's wealthy merchants.^[121]

From Guangzhou he went north to Quanzhou and then proceeded to the city of [Fuzhou](#), where he took up residence with Zahir al-Din and met Kawam al-Din and a fellow countryman named Al-Bushri of [Ceuta](#), who had become a wealthy merchant in China. Al-Bushri accompanied Ibn Battuta northwards to [Hangzhou](#) and paid for the gifts that Ibn Battuta would present to the [Emperor Huizong of Yuan](#).^[122]

Ibn Battuta said that [Hangzhou](#) was one of the largest cities he had ever seen,^[123] and he noted its charm, describing that the city sat on a [beautiful lake](#) surrounded by gentle green hills.^[124] He mentions the city's Muslim quarter and resided as a guest with a family of Egyptian origin.^[122] During his stay at Hangzhou he was particularly impressed by the large number of well-crafted and well-painted Chinese wooden ships, with coloured sails and silk awnings, assembling in the canals. Later he attended a banquet of the Yuan administrator of the city named Qurtai, who according to Ibn Battuta, was very fond of the skills of local Chinese [conjurers](#).^[125] Ibn Battuta also mentions locals who worshipped a [solar deity](#).^[126]

He described floating through the [Grand Canal](#) on a boat watching crop fields, orchids, merchants in black silk, and women in flowered silk and priests also in silk.^[127] In [Beijing](#), Ibn Battuta referred to himself as the long-lost ambassador from the [Delhi Sultanate](#) and was invited to the Yuan imperial court of Emperor Huizong (who according to Ibn Battuta was worshipped by some people in China). Ibn Battuta noted that the palace of [Khanbaliq](#) was made of wood and that the ruler's "head wife" ([Empress Qi](#)) held processions in her honour.^{[128][129]}

Ibn Battuta also wrote he had heard of "the rampart of [Yajuj and Majuj](#)" that was "sixty days' travel" from the city of Zeitun (Quanzhou);^[130] [Hamilton Alexander Rosskeen Gibb](#) notes that Ibn Battuta believed that the [Great Wall of China](#) was built by [Dhul-Qarnayn](#) to contain Gog and Magog as mentioned in the [Quran](#).^[130] However, Ibn Battuta, who asked about the wall in China, could find no one who had either seen it or knew of anyone who had seen it.^[131]

Ibn Battuta travelled from [Beijing](#) to Hangzhou, and then proceeded to [Fuzhou](#). Upon his return to Quanzhou, he soon boarded a Chinese junk owned by the [Sultan of Samudera Pasai Sultanate](#) heading for Southeast Asia, whereupon Ibn Battuta was unfairly charged a hefty sum by the crew and lost much of what he had collected during his stay in China.^[132]

Battuta claimed that the Emperor Huizong of Yuan had interred with him in his grave six slave soldiers and four girl slaves.^[133] Silver, gold, weapons, and carpets were put into the grave.^[134]

Return

After returning to Quanzhou in 1346, Ibn Battuta began his journey back to Morocco.^[135] In [Kozhikode](#), he once again considered throwing himself at the mercy of Muhammad bin Tughluq in Delhi, but thought better of it and decided to carry on to Mecca. On his way to [Basra](#) he passed through the [Strait of Hormuz](#), where he learned that [Abu Sa'id](#), last ruler of the [Ilkhanate Dynasty](#), had died in Iran. Abu Sa'id's territories had subsequently collapsed due to a fierce civil war between the Iranians and Mongols.^[136]

In 1348, Ibn Battuta arrived in Damascus with the intention of retracing the route of his first *hajj*. He then learned that his father had died 15 years earlier,^[137] and death became the dominant theme for the next year or so. The [Black Death had struck](#), and he stopped in [Homs](#) as the plague spread through Syria, [Palestine](#), and Arabia. He heard of terrible death tolls in [Gaza](#) but returned to Damascus that July, where the death toll had reached 2,400 victims each day.^[138] When he stopped in Gaza, he found it was depopulated, and in Egypt he stayed at [Abu Sir](#). Reportedly deaths in Cairo had reached levels of 1,100 each day.^[139] He made *hajj* to Mecca, then he decided to return to Morocco, nearly a quarter of a century after leaving home.^[140] On the way he made one last detour to [Sardinia](#), then, in 1349, returned to Tangier by way of [Fez](#), only to discover that his mother had also died a few months before.^[141]

Itinerary 1349–1354



Ibn Battuta Itinerary 1349–1354 (North Africa, Spain and West Africa)

Spain and North Africa



Ibn Battuta visited the [Emirate of Granada](#), which was the final vestige of the Arab populace in [Al-Andalus](#).

After a few days in Tangier, Ibn Battuta set out for a trip to the Muslim-controlled territory of [al-Andalus](#) on the [Iberian Peninsula](#). King [Alfonso XI of Castile and León](#) had threatened to attack [Gibraltar](#), so in 1350, Ibn Battuta joined a group of Muslims leaving Tangier with the intention of defending the port.^[142] By the time he arrived, the Black Death had killed Alfonso and the threat of invasion had receded, so he turned the trip into a sight-seeing tour ending up in [Granada](#).^[143]

After his departure from al-Andalus he decided to travel through Morocco. On his return home, he stopped for a while in [Marrakech](#), which was almost a ghost town following the recent plague and the transfer of the capital to [Fez](#).^[144]

Mali and Timbuktu



Sankore Madrasah in Timbuktu, Mali

In the autumn of 1351, Ibn Battuta left Fez and made his way to the town of [Sijilmasa](#) on the northern edge of the Sahara in present-day Morocco.^[145] There he bought a number of camels and stayed for four months. He set out again with a caravan in February 1352 and, after 25 days, arrived at the dry salt lake bed of [Taghaza](#) with its [salt mines](#). All of the local buildings were made from slabs of salt by the slaves of the Masufa tribe, who cut the salt in thick slabs for transport by camel. Taghaza was a commercial centre and awash with Malian gold, though Ibn Battuta did not form a favourable impression of the place, recording that it was plagued by flies and the water was [brackish](#).^[146]

After a ten-day stay in Taghaza, the caravan set out for the oasis of Tasarahla (probably Bir al-Ksaib),^{[147][h]} where it stopped for three days in preparation for the last and most difficult leg of the journey across the vast desert. From Tasarahla, a Masufa scout was sent ahead to the oasis town of [Oualata](#), where he arranged for water to be transported a distance of four days travel where it would meet the thirsty caravan. Oualata was the southern terminus of the [trans-Saharan trade](#) route and had recently become part of the [Mali Empire](#). Altogether, the caravan took two months to cross the 1,600 km (990 mi) of desert from Sijilmasa.^[148]



Azalai salt caravan from [Agadez](#) to [Bilma](#), Niger

From there, Ibn Battuta travelled southwest along a river he believed to be the Nile (it was actually the [Niger River](#)), until he reached the capital of the Mali Empire.^[i] There he met [Mansa Suleyman](#), king since 1341. Ibn Battuta disapproved of the fact that female slaves, servants, and even the daughters of the sultan went about exposing [parts of their bodies](#) not befitting a Muslim.^[150] He wrote in his *Rihla* that black Africans were characterised by "ill manners" and "contempt for white men", and that he "was long astonished at their feeble intellect and their respect for mean things."^[151] He left the capital in February accompanied by a local Malian merchant and journeyed overland by camel to [Timbuktu](#).^[152] Though in the next two centuries it would become the most important city in the region, at that time it was a small city and relatively unimportant.^[153] It was during this journey that Ibn Battuta first encountered a [hippopotamus](#). The animals were feared by the local boatmen and hunted with lances to which strong cords were attached.^[154] After a short stay in Timbuktu, Ibn Battuta journeyed down the Niger to [Gao](#) in a canoe carved from a single tree. At the time Gao was an important commercial center.^[155]

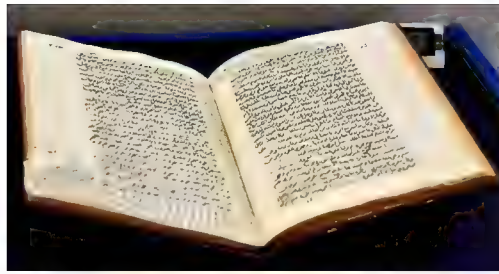
After spending a month in Gao, Ibn Battuta set off with a large caravan for the oasis of [Takedda](#). On his journey across the desert, he received a message from the [Sultan of Morocco](#) commanding him to return home. He set off for Sijilmasa in September 1353, accompanying a large caravan transporting 600 female slaves, and arrived back in Morocco early in 1354.^[156]

Ibn Battuta's itinerary gives scholars a glimpse as to when Islam first began to spread into the heart of west Africa.^[157]

Works



Purported Mausoleum of Ibn Battuta in [Tangier](#)



Historic copy of selected parts of the
Travel Report by Ibn Battuta, 1836 CE, Cairo

After returning home from his travels in 1354, and at the suggestion of the [Marinid](#) ruler of Morocco, [Abu Inan Faris](#), Ibn Battuta dictated an account in Arabic of his journeys to [Ibn Juzayy](#), a scholar whom he had previously met in Granada. The account is the only source for Ibn Battuta's adventures. The full title of the manuscript may be translated as *A Masterpiece to Those Who Contemplate the Wonders of Cities and the Marvels of Travelling* (تحفة النظار في غرائب الأمصار وعجائب الأسفار, *Tuḥfat an-Nuẓẓār fī Gharā'ib al-Amṣār wa 'Ajā'ib al-Asfār*).^{[158][j]} However, it is often simply referred to as *The Travels* (الرحلة, *Rihla*),^[160] in reference to a [standard form of Arabic literature](#).

There is no indication that Ibn Battuta made any notes or had any journal during his twenty-nine years of travelling.^[k] When he came to dictate an account of his experiences he had to rely on memory and manuscripts produced by earlier travellers. Ibn Juzayy did not acknowledge his sources and presented some of the earlier descriptions as Ibn Battuta's own observations. When describing Damascus, Mecca, Medina, and some other places in the Middle East, he clearly copied passages from the account by the [Andalusian Ibn Jubayr](#) which had been written more than 150 years earlier.^[162] Similarly, most of Ibn Juzayy's descriptions of places in Palestine were copied from an account by the 13th-century traveller [Muhammad al-Abdari](#).^[163]

[Scholars](#) do not believe that Ibn Battuta visited all the places he described and argue that in order to provide a comprehensive description of places in the Muslim world, he relied on hearsay evidence and made use of accounts by earlier travellers. For example, it is considered very unlikely that Ibn Battuta made a trip up the [Volga River](#) from [New Sarai](#) to visit [Bolghar](#)^[164] and there are serious doubts about a number of other journeys such as his trip to Sana'a in Yemen,^[165] his journey from [Balkh](#) to [Bistam](#) in [Khorasan](#),^[166] and his trip around Anatolia.^[167]

Ibn Battuta's claim that a [Maghrebian](#) called "Abu'l Barakat the Berber" converted the Maldives to Islam is contradicted by an entirely different story which says that the [Maldives were converted to Islam](#) after miracles were performed by a [Tabrizi](#) named Maulana Shaikh Yusuf Shams-ud-din according to the [Tarikh](#), the official history of the Maldives.^[168]

Some scholars have also questioned whether he really visited China.^[169] Ibn Battuta may have plagiarised entire sections of his descriptions of China lifted from works by other authors like "Masalik al-absar fi mamalik al-amsar" by [Shihab al-Umari](#), [Sulaiman al-Tajir](#), and possibly from [Al Juwayni](#), [Rashid al din](#), and an [Alexander romance](#). Furthermore, Ibn Battuta's description and

Marco Polo's writings share extremely similar sections and themes, with some of the same commentary, e.g. it is unlikely that the 3rd Caliph [Uthman ibn Affan](#) had someone with the identical name in China who was encountered by Ibn Battuta.^[170]

However, even if the *Rihla* is not fully based on what its author personally witnessed, it provides an important account of much of the 14th-century world. [Concubines](#) were used by Ibn Battuta such as in Delhi.^{[161]:111–113,137,141,238}^[171] He wedded several women, divorced at least some of them, and in Damascus, Malabar, Delhi, Bukhara, and the Maldives had children by them or by concubines.^[172] Ibn Battuta insulted Greeks as "enemies of Allah", drunkards and "swine eaters", while at the same time in Ephesus he purchased and used a Greek girl who was one of his many slave girls in his "harem" through [Byzantium](#), Khorasan, Africa, and Palestine.^[173] It was two decades before he again returned to find out what happened to one of his wives and child in Damascus.^[174]

Ibn Battuta often experienced [culture shock](#) in regions he visited where the local customs of recently converted peoples did not fit in with his orthodox Muslim background. Among the Turks and Mongols, he remarked that on seeing a Turkic couple in a bazaar one might assume that the man was the woman's servant when he was in fact her husband.^[175] He also felt that dress customs in the Maldives, and some [sub-Saharan](#) regions in Africa were too revealing.

Little is known about Ibn Battuta's life after completion of his *Rihla* in 1355. He was appointed a judge in Morocco and died in 1368 or 1369.^[176]

Ibn Battuta's work was unknown outside the Muslim world until the beginning of the 19th century, when the German traveller-explorer [Ulrich Jasper Seetzen](#) (1767–1811) acquired a collection of manuscripts in the Middle East, among which was a 94-page volume containing an abridged version of Ibn Juzayy's text. Three extracts were published in 1818 by the German Orientalist [Johann Kosegarten](#).^[177] A fourth extract was published the following year.^[178] French scholars were alerted to the initial publication by a lengthy review published in the *Journal de Savants* by the Orientalist [Silvestre de Sacy](#).^[179]

Three copies of another abridged manuscript were acquired by the Swiss traveller [Johann Burckhardt](#) and bequeathed to the [University of Cambridge](#). He gave a brief overview of their content in a book published posthumously in 1819.^[180] The Arabic text was translated into English by the Orientalist [Samuel Lee](#) and published in [London](#) in 1829.^[181]

In the 1830s, during the French occupation of [Algeria](#), the [Bibliothèque Nationale](#) (BNF) in [Paris](#) acquired five manuscripts of Ibn Battuta's travels, two of which were complete.^[1] One manuscript containing just the second part of the work is dated 1356 and is believed to be Ibn Juzayy's autograph.^[186] The BNF manuscripts were used in 1843 by the Irish-French orientalist [Baron de Slane](#) to produce a translation into French of Ibn Battuta's visit to the Sudan.^[187] They were also studied by the French scholars [Charles Defrémery](#) and Beniamino Sanguinetti. Beginning in 1853

they published a series of four volumes containing a [critical edition](#) of the Arabic text together with a translation into French.^[188] In their introduction Defrémery and Sanguinetti praised Lee's annotations but were critical of his translation which they claimed lacked precision, even in straightforward passages.^[m]

In 1929, exactly a century after the publication of Lee's translation, the historian and orientalist [Hamilton Gibb](#) published an English translation of selected portions of Defrémery and Sanguinetti's Arabic text.^[190] Gibb had proposed to the [Hakluyt Society](#) in 1922 that he should prepare an annotated translation of the entire *Rihla* into English.^[191] His intention was to divide the translated text into four volumes, each volume corresponding to one of the volumes published by Defrémery and Sanguinetti. The first volume was not published until 1958.^[192] Gibb died in 1971, having completed the first three volumes. The fourth volume was prepared by Charles Beckingham and published in 1994.^[193] Defrémery and Sanguinetti's printed text has now been translated into number of other languages.

Historicity

German [Islamic studies](#) scholar Ralph Elger views Battuta's travel account as an important literary work but doubts the historicity of much of its content, which he suspects to be a work of fiction compiled and inspired from other contemporary travel reports.^[194] Various other scholars have raised similar doubts.^[195]

In 1987, [Ross E. Dunn](#) similarly expressed doubts that any evidence would be found to support the narrative of the *Rihla*, but in 2010, [Tim Mackintosh-Smith](#) completed a multi-volume field study in dozens of the locales mentioned in the *Rihla*, in which he reports on previously unknown manuscripts of Islamic law kept in the archives of [Al-Azhar University](#) in Cairo that were copied by Ibn Battuta in [Damascus](#) in 1326, corroborating the date in the *Rihla* of his sojourn in Syria.^[196]

Present-day cultural references



Borj en-Nâam barracks in [Tangier](#), repurposed as Ibn Battuta Memorial Museum

The largest themed mall in [Dubai, UAE](#), the [Ibn Battuta Mall](#) is named for him and features both areas designed to recreate the exotic lands he visited on his travels and statuary tableaux depicting scenes from his life history.^{[197][198]}

A giant semblance of Battuta, alongside two others from the history of Arab exploration, the geographer and historian [Al Bakri](#) and the navigator and cartographer [Ibn Majid](#), is displayed at the [Mobility pavilion](#) at [Expo 2020](#) in Dubai in a section of the exhibition designed by [Weta Workshop](#).^[199]

[Tangier Ibn Battouta Airport](#) is an international airport located in his hometown of Tangier, Morocco. [Ibn Batouta Stadium](#) in Tangier is also named after him.

See also

- [List of places visited by Ibn Battuta](#)
- [Ibn Fadhlān](#)
- [Ibrahim ibn Yaqub](#)
- [Benjamin of Tudela](#)
- [Ibn Sufi](#)

Notes

- [Arabic](#): ابن بطوطة, [romanized](#): *Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*; fully: *Shams al-Dīn Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Yūsuf al-Lawātī al-Ṭanjī*; [Arabic](#): شمس الدين أبو عبد الله محمد بن عبد الله بن محمد بن إبراهيم بن محمد بن إبراهيم بن يوسف اللواتي الطنجي
- Aydhad was a port on the west coast of the Red Sea at 22°19′51″N 36°29′25″E﻿ / ﻿https://geohack.toolforge.org/geohack.php?pagename=Ibn_Battuta¶ms=22_19_51_N_36_29_25_E_﻿ / ﻿^[28].
- Ibn Battuta left Cairo on around 16 July 1326 and arrived in Damascus three weeks later on 9 August 1326.^[32] He described travelling on a complicated zig-zag route across Palestine in which he visited more than twenty cities. Such a journey would have been impossible in the allotted time and both Gibb (1958) and Hrbek (1962) have argued that Ibn Battuta conflated this journey with later journeys that he made in the region.^{[33][34]} Elad (1987) has shown that Ibn Battuta's descriptions of most of the sites in Palestine were not original but were copied (without acknowledgement) from the earlier *rihla* by the traveller [Mohammed al-Abdari](#). Because of these difficulties, it is not possible to determine an accurate chronology of Ibn Battuta's travels in the region.^[35]

- d. Most of Ibn Battuta's descriptions of the towns along the [Tigris](#) are copied from [Ibn Jabayr's *Rihla*](#) from 1184.^{[45][46]}
- e. Ibn Battuta states that he stayed in Mecca for the *hajj* of 1327, 1328, 1329 and 1330 but gives comparatively little information on his stays. After the *hajj* of 1330 he left for East Africa, arriving back again in Mecca before the 1332 *hajj*. He states that he then left for India and arrived at the Indus river on 12 September 1333; however, although he does not specify exact dates, the description of his complex itinerary and the clues in the text to the chronology suggest that this journey to India lasted around three years. He must have therefore either left Mecca two years earlier than stated or arrived in India two years later. The issue is discussed by [Gibb 1962](#), pp. 528–537 Vol. 2, [Hrbek 1962](#) and [Dunn 2005](#), pp. 132–133.
- f. This is one of several occasions where Ibn Battuta interrupts a journey to branch out on a side trip only to later skip back and resume the original journey. Gibb describes these side trips as "divagations".^[75] The divagation through Anatolia is considered credible as Ibn Battuta describes numerous personal experiences and there is sufficient time between leaving Mecca in mid-November 1330 and reaching Eğirdir on the way back from Erzurum at the start of Ramadan (8 June) in 1331.^[74] Gibb still admits that he found it difficult to believe that Ibn Battuta actually travelled as far east as Erzurum.^[76]
- g. In the *Rihla* the date of Ibn Battuta's departure from Delhi is given as 17 Safar 743 AH or 22 July 1342.^{[97][98]} Dunn has argued that this is probably an error and to accommodate Ibn Battuta's subsequent travels and visits to the Maldives it is more likely that he left Delhi in 1341.^[99]
- h. Bir al-Ksaib (also Bir Ounane or El Gçaib) is in northern Mali at [21°17'33"N 5°37'30"W](#) (http://geohack.toolforge.org/geohack.php?pagename=Ibn_Battuta¶ms=21_17_33_N_5_37_30_W_). The oasis is 265 km (165 mi) south of Taghaza and 470 km (290 mi) north of Oualata.
- i. The location of the Malian capital has been the subject of considerable scholarly debate, but there is no consensus. The historian [John Hunwick](#) has studied the times given by Ibn Battuta for the various stages of his journey and proposed that the capital is likely to have been on the left side of the [Niger River](#) somewhere between [Bamako](#) and [Nyamina](#).^[149]
- j. Dunn gives the clunkier translation *A Gift to the Observers Concerning the Curiosities of the Cities and the Marvels Encountered in Travels*.^[159]
- k. Though he mentions being robbed of some notes^[161]

- l. Neither de Slane's 19th century catalogue^[182] nor the modern online equivalent provide any information on the provenance of the manuscripts.^[183] Dunn states that all five manuscripts were "found in Algeria"^[184] but in their introduction Defrémery and Sanguinetti mention that the BNF had acquired one manuscript (MS Supplément arabe 909/Arabe 2287) from M. Delaporte, a former French consul to Morocco.^[185]
- m. French: "*La version de M. Lee manque quelquefois d'exactitude, même dans des passage fort simples et très-faciles*".^[189]

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